

## Showcasing Australasian services marketing research – special issue based on ANZMAC 2014

We have great pleasure in presenting this special issue of the *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, based on some of the best papers from the services track at the Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy (ANZMAC) in 2014. The conference was hosted by the School of Marketing at Griffith University, Brisbane. The conference theme was how marketing has been used effectively as an agent of change in both social and commercial settings. In all, 434 delegates attended representing 36 different countries across the world. The conference inspired a diversity of thinking and openness, for example, Jan Brace Govan ran the first Consumer Culture Theory workshop prior to the conference, several international researchers in the field contributing to this popular workshop, and resulting in the continuance of this workshop on the ANZMAC conference programme, in 2015 and later this year at the 2016 conference. The services marketing track was the second largest at the conference with around 67 submissions. Across the board, the papers demonstrate emerging critical and diverse perspectives that signify the advancement of the field of services marketing.

Some of the papers in this issue support the concept of change, the theme of the conference, and showcase the concepts of change, advancement and broadening the boundaries of marketing.

Two papers address the rapidly developing field of brand engagement. The first paper “Broadening brand engagement within the service-centric perspective: an intersubjective hermeneutic framework” is a conceptual paper that won the best paper award in the services marketing track. In this paper, Yuri Seo, Carol Kelleher and Rod Brodie take a theoretical lens and consider how brand engagement emerges in the broader context of consumer lives. They use an intersubjective orientation to illustrate the nature of practices, experiences and value-in-use, and discuss their interrelationships in the context of service-centric brand engagement. The authors develop a Hermeneutical Framework; the hermeneutic circle in the model demonstrates how the consumer brand engagement process is iteratively co-constructed between the socially constructed brand engagement practices, individualised and collective brand experiences, and value-in-use. Thus, emergent brand experiences are both enabled by and, at the same time, actualise brand engagement practices, value-in-use acting as a bridge between the individualised experiences and social practices that they entail. The paper offers a platform for further investigations of intersubjective brand engagement and brand experiences in a variety of contexts.

The next paper “Branded marketing events (BMEs): engaging Australian and French wine consumers” takes a new angle on customer experiences, linking experiences to brand engagement within the context of BMEs. Such events can be, for example, in the wine industry, wine tastings and tours, concerts at vineyards, and special events. Teagan Altschwager, Jodie Conduit, Tatiana Bouzdine-Chameev and Steve Goodman examine how the various components of experiences can act as a strategic tool for the facilitation of customer brand engagement. As BMEs take place within a physical environment in which event attendees experience a brand; the role of experiential components are highly salient. Five components are examined in this study: cognitive, emotional, pragmatic, sensorial and relational components. The effects of BME’s across Australian and French wine event attendees are compared. While overall brand engagement had a significant effect on wine purchase intentions in both countries, the effect was less in



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the case of French event attendees. Further, only pragmatic experiences built engagement in the French case, whereas Australian event attendees were influenced by cognitive, sensorial, as well as relational experiences. The possible reasons for differences across cultures are discussed in the managerial implications.

Early services marketing suggested that inseparability of production and the customer's consumption is a unique characteristic of services marketing, in comparison to goods marketing. However, particularly with the rapid rise of technology, service production can indeed be separated from the customer in several ways. This paper "Consumer construal of separation in virtual services" by Nicole Hartley and Teegan Green develops a construal-level framework across increasing levels of technology, incorporating both spatial and temporal construal. The authors argue that consumers mentally construe psychological distance in response to service separation and that this varies across the spectrum of virtualization of service offerings ranging from face-to-face which represented the lowest psychological distance through to the most virtualized service offerings (such as via video or teleconferencing) which were rated as having the highest psychological distance. The study conducted in the tourism and education domains, showed that while generally greater spatial separation decreased consumer evaluations, temporal separation appeared to have no effect on service evaluation. The study represents an important basis for research on future virtualised services, such as in healthcare, which poses a fascinating dilemma; since in this context, service providers of virtualized services would aim to minimise psychological distance.

Two other conceptual papers follow. "A multilevel consideration of service design conditions: towards a portfolio of organisational capabilities, interactive practices and individual abilities" by Ingo Karpen, Ingo Gerda Gemser and Giulia Calabretta, focusses on service design and the organisational conditions that facilitate service design. The authors develop a service design portfolio founded on organisational capabilities, interactive practices and individual abilities (CPA) as units of analysis across different service system levels. The authors derive six illustrative constellations based on these practices and capabilities that potentially enable meaningful customer experiences through service design. Examples of constellations derived include "human and meaning centred", and "co-creative and inclusive". This paper contributes to service design theory by advancing a micro-foundations perspective. An important aspect of the research is that while macro- and micro-level constructs iteratively affect each other, the focus is on how micro-phenomena (individual designer abilities) contribute to the execution of design driving practices.

Our final paper "Markets and market boundaries: a social practice approach" by Martyn Gosling, James Richard and Yuri Seo, develops a conceptual market practices model based on social practice theories and explores new ways of describing market boundaries. Earlier work has viewed markets as economic structures, which is now challenged by contemporary conceptualizations of markets and marketing. The authors argue for the importance of considering social practices to define market boundaries and identify specific categories of practices termed parameters, defined as "specific categories of interrelated practices establishing the physical and virtual limits of a market within which specific exchange performances are understood and enacted by a set of market actors". The authors explain that that the boundaries are "plastic" in that in response to exogenous or endogenous stimuli they may form, change and reform, and in doing so change the market within. Nine parameters are identified to describe market boundaries representing competencies (competitive intensity, legal and economic institutions, and responsiveness), materials (information, value propositions, technology) and meanings (social and community meanings, needs and space). The model suggests a flexible and generalisable approach to how markets form, function, stabilise, destabilise and change, and places services at the centre of exchange.

These papers cover a diverse range of topics. The papers add to the increasingly creative and multi-disciplinary topics published at this time within the umbrella of services marketing. Other disciplines that are relevant to these papers in one way or the other include computer science, economics, design and management as well as marketing. We hope that these papers will afford a basis for future research.

Not least of all, we thank the reviewers for their contribution to these papers and some of the authors for waiting for all five to be ready for publication!

We have also enjoyed working with the Chief Editors of the journal, Associate Professor Chatura Ranaweera, School of Business, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada and Professor Marianna Sigala, Professor of Tourism at the Business School, University of South Australia, and have a fuller understanding of the challenging role of editor! The *Journal of Service Theory and Practice* has a very rigorous review process, and is on a firm footing for an even better future.

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